

A Bridge Home: Homeless Encampment Engagement, Triage, and Trash Removal Protocols

Purpose:

In April 2018, the Mayor and the City Council declared an emergency shelter crisis and included funding in the City's FY 2018-19 budget to support the construction of emergency shelters Citywide as part of a program called A Bridge Home ("ABH"). Under this Program, once a temporary homeless shelter is identified and opened, enhanced cleaning by the Los Angeles Bureau of Sanitation ("LASAN") will occur in a defined zone around the shelter and the area where the homeless population for the shelter was.

City residents may be reluctant to embrace the opening of a temporary homeless shelter in their neighborhood due to fear of spillover encampments and sidewalk blockages in the area adjacent to the shelter. To encourage the placement of a temporary homeless shelter in an area of need in the City, discrete areas surrounding a newly sited temporary homeless shelter may receive more directed or focused enforcement under Los Angeles Municipal Code ("LAMC") Section 56.11 (eff. April 11, 2016; See Attached). At the written request of the Mayor's Office or a Council Office declaring any discrete area around a temporary homeless shelter to be a Special Enforcement & Cleaning Zone ("Zone"), the following principles will guide implementation of Section 56.11 in the Zone, with an overarching view toward a client-centered approach to conducting encampment engagement, triage, and trash removal activities.

Shared Goals and Best Practices:

- The City of Los Angeles, the County of Los Angeles and the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority ("LAHSA") have a shared purpose in coordinated encampment engagement: identifying and leveraging the opportunity to address public health and safety concerns by creating a long-term solution to end street homelessness through sustained engagement of encampment occupants.
- The policies and practices of each involved entity will align with the objectives of the City's Comprehensive Homelessness Strategy and Los Angeles County's Approved Strategies to Combat Homelessness.
- These guidelines will be coordinated and implemented by the agencies in the City's Unified Homelessness Response Center ("UHRC").

Procedures for Special Enforcement & Cleaning Zones:

- Zones refer to the areas around the ABH shelters that are subject to these guidelines.
- City Council Offices, in collaboration with the Mayor's Office, community stakeholders, and others will identify locations for temporary homeless shelters under the ABH Program and determine each shelter's projected opening date.
- Zones will be determined at least 90 days prior to the projected opening of a new temporary homeless shelter.
- Factors that may be considered when determining Zones include, but are not limited to:
 - Assessment made by outreach workers and outreach teams familiar with the area and homeless individuals who live in it;
 - Shelter location and the immediate area around the shelter;
 - Whether the Zone is right-sized to the number of individuals living in proximity to the shelter location;
 - Whether the Zone is properly based on the numbers of individuals, not the number of tents or encampments;

- Outreach workers will collaborate to identify individuals near the Zones who may not be part of an identified encampment but would be appropriate participants for the shelter beds.
- LAHSA will submit its proposed recommendations for larger outreach areas surrounding the Zones to Council Offices and the Mayor's Office based on input from outreach staff and comprehensive data analysis. Council Offices and the Mayor's Office will review the recommendations. Council Offices will make the final determination concerning the Zones.

Signage for Zones:

- Upon finalizing the locations of Zones but by no later than 90 days prior to a shelter opening, the City shall post appropriate signage throughout the Zone in accordance with LASAN's LAMC 56.11 Protocol #12.
- At a minimum, signs should include the following information: the effective date of enforcement within the Zone, days and start times of scheduled waste removal and cleanups, contact information for support agencies, and the location where items may be retrieved post-removal.

Engagement by LASAN & LAHSA:

- SAN will follow its LAMC 56.11 Protocol #12.
- Engagement should be limited to addressing immediate threats to health or safety of the public in the encampment or the community, such as those described in the LAMC 56.11 protocols.
- LAHSA shall assist LASAN, LAPD, and other entities in determining a suitable timeline for encampment cleanups, which may be informed by the identified needs of encampment occupants and the anticipated frequency of engagement.
- LAHSA shall apprise partner agencies on engagement progress and make modifications to the timeline as necessary to the extent permitted by law and policy.
- Schedules, including dates and locations, shall be made available to UHRC participating agencies.
- In the event that a cleanup will not commence as scheduled or is rescheduled to a later date, all UHRC participating agencies shall be informed, and LAHSA shall ensure that occupants are directly notified.
- The City will provide encampment residents with regular access to waste receptacles (e.g., roll-away bins) and trash removal outside of scheduled encampment cleanup periods

Engagement by Law Enforcement Entities:

- LAPD will be guided in its enforcement posture by the Department's Homeless Policy (eff. June 21, 2016; See Attached), with the following considerations specific to Zones: 90 days before and for 30 days after the opening of a temporary homeless shelter, enforcement activity will focus primarily on incidents which pose imminent risk to public health and safety, violations of the Americans with Disabilities Act, blocked ingress/egress or other obstructions, and law enforcement response to violent crime, property crime, and narcotic offenses.
- 30 days following the opening of a shelter, law enforcement may coordinate with other City Departments toward increased expedited cleanups, rapid response, and bulky item removal, while continuing enforcement relating to incidents posing imminent risk to public health and safety, violations of the Americans with Disabilities Act, blocked ingress/egress or other obstructions, and law enforcement response to violent crime, property crime and narcotic offenses.

- The use of stay-away orders can be potentially detrimental to outreach efforts. The City Attorney's Office will review each possible use on a case-by-case basis and work with LAHSA, service providers, and law enforcement prior to and throughout the court process.

Additional Training Opportunities:

- City Staff may participate in client engagement trainings based on local and national best practices. Such trainings should include practices informed by trauma-informed care and engagement strategies for individuals that may have issues that co-occur with homelessness including mental illness, substance use, and prior engagement with law enforcement. The goal of trainings should be to adopt field practices that are sensitive and appropriate to the needs of individuals residing in encampments.
- County and LAHSA staff will participate in training to understand relevant law, encampment cleaning and law enforcement best practices around homeless encampments.
- County, LAHSA, and City Staff should be trained in working together to facilitate coordination between all parties and ensure that engagement practices align with ongoing outreach service.